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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

September 27, 1963

CARL MARCY, CHIEF OF STAFF
 BARRELL ST. CLAIR, CLERK

The Honorable John A. McCone
 Director
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. McCone:

Enclosed is a copy from the Congressional Record of Senate Resolution 204, submitted on September 25, 1963 by Senator Ribicoff (for himself and others), which expresses the sense of the Senate that Soviet persecution of Jews and all other persons be condemned.

Even though this resolution is still being held at the desk for additional sponsors, the Committee would appreciate having comments on it from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Sincerely yours,

J. W. Fulbright
 Chairman

Enclosure

September 25

SOVIET PERSECUTION OF JEWS
AND OTHER PERSONS

Mr. RIBICOFF. Mr. President, today—the day after the U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to the limited nuclear test ban treaty—the world looks with renewed strength and spirit toward the prospect of peace.

It looks with renewed strength and spirit toward the day when all men will enjoy the basic freedoms.

Yet even today, as we look and work toward this goal, freedom of religion is trampled by one of the principal parties to a treaty that has given new hope to the world.

In the Soviet Union the free exercise of religion in any meaningful sense has been denied to everyone. All religions exist precariously, to say the least, in an officially antireligious atmosphere. But in a variety of fundamental ways, Judaism is subject to unique discrimination. Today the chief victims of religious persecution are the Jews.

The proposed execution of a Jewish rabbi for an alleged economic crime is only the latest in a long series of acts that provide us with tragic and abundant evidence of outright persecution.

Soviet law makes anti-Semitism a crime in Russia. Yet in Russia the Jew is branded as a Jew. On his domestic passport is stamped the word "Jewish" that identifies his nationality.

But while he has a nationality and secondarily, in Russia a religion, he has none of the rights of other nationalities and cultural groups. His ways of worship are severely limited. His synagogues are shut down, he is denied burial in the consecrated ground of Jewish cemeteries.

Other religious groups are allowed publishing facilities, central governing bodies, and religious objects. But the Jew has no religious articles—like the prayer shawl or phylacteries. He is permitted no publication facilities and no publications. No Hebrew Bible has been published for Jews since 1917. The study of Hebrew has been outlawed, even for religious purposes. He has no central organization or nationwide federation as do other major faiths. So he has no voice or way of bolstering and serving his faith.

There is one synagogue and one rabbi in the Soviet Union for each 15,000 or 16,000 Jewish believers. And though one yeshiva—or rabbinical academy—was established in 1957, it has been transformed by restrictions into an empty shell. This year there were only four students left. Obviously, there will be no way of replacing the rabbis now serving Jews in Russia—and most of them are in their seventies or eighties.

There are 3 million Russian Jews. And if they are not being slaughtered in mass pogroms, as they once were in Russia, and as they were in the ovens of the Nazi concentration camps, they are being slowly strangled. They are enjoying none of the gradually increasing freedoms of the Soviet society.

Chairman Khrushchev has labeled reports of anti-Jewish persecution as "a profound delusion." But is it a delusion when in the last 2 years at least 83 Jews

have been executed out of a total of 140 people condemned for alleged economic offenses? Is it a delusion when reputable reporters tell us of arrests, trials, and executions—of mass trials in many cities that have been markedly anti-Jewish? Is it a delusion when kosher butcher shops are closed and elderly Jews are put in prison for baking matzo or unleavened bread in their own homes and selling it for the Passover holidays?

To put an end to the special qualities of the Jew—to stymie him if he seeks expression of his religious faith—to bully him and harass him until he gives up the religious heritage of the centuries—these are the ends officially sought by the Government of the Soviet Union.

The facts are most clearly stated in a scholarly article by Moshe Decter published in the distinguished quarterly review *Foreign Affairs* this past January, which I shall ask unanimous consent, Mr. President, to have printed in the Record at the conclusion of my remarks. The Jews are the only nationality deprived of the basic cultural rights accorded to all others in the U.S.S.R.

The Jew has no Jewish books or periodical. He has no theater, though the Yiddish theater was once considered a matter of Soviet pride. He is vilified in the rigidly controlled Soviet press; anti-Jewish sentiments and stereotypes are built up, especially in the provincial press.

Most importantly, perhaps, he is cut off from the outside world. He has been warned: "Beware of foreigners." And of course, he cannot emigrate—cannot leave to seek his freedom elsewhere.

It is time that the free peoples of the world expressed their conscience about the persecution of the Jews in the Soviet Union. It is time we in the Senate speak up—on behalf of the free peoples of the United States.

The world has learned from bitter experience of the dangers of persecution of the Jews. We have learned that it is a symptom of a greater sickness. A symptom, though it hurts the sufferer, is not felt by others until the sickness spreads.

Let us try to curb this sickness before it spreads. Let us join together to demand that the Soviet Union curb her persecution of the Jews.

Let us say to her:

If the world is to have new hope, if the cold war is to ease, let the first thaw occur in the icy indifference you have shown to the plaintive cries of those within your borders who seek an end to religious persecution.

Mr. President, I therefore submit, for appropriate reference, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Soviet persecution of Jews and all other persons be condemned. I submit this resolution for Senators ALLOTT, ANDERSON, BARTLETT, BAYH, BEALL, BOGGS, BREWSTER, BURDICK, CANNON, CASE, CHURCH, CLARK, COOPER, COTTON, DODD, DOMINICK, DOUGLAS, EDMONDSON, GOLDWATER, GRUENING, HART, HARTKE, HOLLAND, HUMPHREY, INOUE, JACKSON, JAVITS, JORDAN of Idaho, KEATING, KENNEDY, KUCHEL, LAUSCHE, MAGNUSON, McCARTHY, McGOVERN, MCINTYRE, McNAMARA, METCALF, MONRONEY, MORSE,

MORTON, MOSS, MUNDT, NELSON, NEUBERGER, PASTORE, PELL, PROXMIRE, RANDOLPH, SALTONSTALL, SCOTT, SIMPSON, SMATHERS, SYMINGTON, THURMOND, TOWER, WALTERS, WILLIAMS of New Jersey, YARBOROUGH, and YOUNG of Ohio, and myself. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be printed at this point in the Record, that it remain on the table for 10 days, and that there be printed in the Record, at this point an article from the January, 1963, issue of *Foreign Affairs*, entitled "The Status of the Jews in the Soviet Union" by Moshe Decter and an article from the June 16, 1962, issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, entitled "The Kremlin's Persecution of Jews" by Rowland Evans, Jr.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The resolution will be received and appropriately referred; and, without objection, the resolution will lie on the table, as requested, and be printed in the Record, along with the articles mentioned.

The resolution (S. Res. 204) was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, as follows:

Whereas the Senate of the United States deeply believes in freedom of religion for all people and is opposed to infringement of this freedom anywhere in the world; and

Whereas abundant evidence has made clear that the Government of the Soviet Union is persecuting Jewish citizens by singling them out for extreme punishment for alleged economic offenses, by confiscating synagogues, by closing Jewish cemeteries, by arresting rabbis and lay religious leaders, by curtailing religious observances, by discriminating against Jews in cultural activities and access to higher education, by imposing restrictions that prevent the reuniting of Jews with their families in other lands, and by other acts that oppress Jews in the free exercise of their faith; and

Whereas the Soviet Union has a clear opportunity to match the words of its constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion with specific actions so that the world may know whether there is genuine hope for a new day of better understanding among all people. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That it is the sense of the Senate that persecution of any persons because of their religion by the Soviet Union be condemned, and that the Soviet Union in the name of decency and humanity cease executing persons for alleged economic offenses, and fully permit the free exercise of religion and the pursuit of culture by Jews and all others within its borders.

The articles presented by Mr. Ribicoff are as follows:

[From *Foreign Affairs* magazine, January 1963]

THE STATUS OF THE JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION
(By Moshe Decter)

During the past quarter-century, enlightened public opinion throughout the world has become keenly sensitive to the treatment of minorities as a barometer of moral decency and social sanity. The awesome experiences of this period have drawn particular attention to the symbolic and actual position of the Jewish minority. In this light the status of the Jews in the Soviet Union warrants special concern.

The situation of Soviet Jews can be comprehended primarily within the framework of Soviet nationality policy. That policy, as reflected in Communist Party directives, the Soviet Constitution, and public law, is based on the ideological acceptance of the concept of national self-determination and on the legal recognition of the right of all nationalities within Soviet borders to cultural free-

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Remarks:

Attached is a letter from Fulbright to the DCI asking for comment on S. Res. 204 containing Soviet persecution of Jews. In this case I believe it appropriate a written response be prepared for the Director's signature. Possibly our answer would be restricted to what we know about Soviet persecution without expressing a view on the resolution as such.

John S. Warner

Suspense: Friday - 4 Oct 63

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